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FM AMEMBASSY YEREVAN
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C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 000588

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [OSCE](#) [TU](#) [AM](#)
SUBJECT: FM OSKANIAN DEFENDS VISA REFUSAL OF TURKISH OSCE
ELECTION OBSERVERS

Classified By: Steve Banks, pol/econ chief, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) CDA and the German Ambassador each protested (during a scheduled meeting with CDA and EU chiefs of mission late May 8), Armenia's refusal to grant visas to Turkey's contingent of seconded OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission short-term observers (STOs). Each associated themselves with ODIHR Director Strohal's May 7 statement of concern about this action by Armenian authorities, and lamented that this decision was not only a violation of OSCE norms but a lost opportunity to further rapprochement with Turkey. (NOTE: German Ambassador Haike Peitsch made clear she was speaking on instructions from Berlin in her bilateral capacity, and not as the representative of the EU Presidency. END NOTE) The other EU member-state COMs present remained silent on the issue.

¶2. (C) FM Oskanian said he was disappointed that Turkey had not shown more "sensitivity" as it done in the past, by not attempting to send observers. He said that during the 2003 elections, Turkey had shown more sensitivity by not insisting on sending observers. He reiterated Armenia's frequent complaints that Turkey has for all these years kept its Armenian border sealed--against all norms of normal relations, and to Armenia's severe economic harm--and has refused Armenia's repeated attempts to establish normal diplomatic relations. Oskanian complained that Turkey had further been insensitive by proposing to send such a large (eight-person) delegation, and putting forward their names so late in the process (though he was not specific about when the applications might have been received. He commented that ensuring security for so many Turks, scattered around the Armenian countryside, would pose a significant burden, on top of the many logistical challenges Armenia was facing in trying to organize effective elections.

¶3. (C) The minister added one piece of information new to us, reporting that Armenia had issued a visa and election observer accreditation to a Turkish parliamentarian participating in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) delegation.

¶4. (C) Neither CDA nor Peitsch were satisfied with Oskanian's protestations, and each reiterated the points that this was a disappointing development.

GODFREY